



**NEW
PARENT
GUIDE**

Table of Contents

WELCOME.....	3
COMPETITIVE STROKES.....	5
SWIM SEASONS.....	5
COMPETITION.....	5
TYPES OR LEVELS OF SWIM MEETS.....	5
PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION.....	6
EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT.....	7
SWIM MEETS...BUT, WERE AFRAID TO ASK.....	7
Before the Meet Starts.....	7
Meet Starts.....	8
What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim.....	8
What to Take To the Meet.....	9
Special Parent's Note.....	9
VERY BASIC SWIMMING RULES.....	9
Starts.....	9
Turns and finishes.....	9
Championship Meets.....	10
Prelims & Finals.....	10
Circle Seeding.....	11
Awards & Placing.....	11
Receiving Awards.....	11
Out of Town Meets.....	11
NUTRITION.....	12
During Training.....	12
Pre-event Nutrition.....	12
Nutrition During Competition.....	12
Nutrition After Competition.....	12
Food Choices.....	12
Eating Out.....	13
Menu Adjectives.....	13
Restaurant Choices.....	13
GLOSSARY.....	14

WELCOME, New Parents and Swimmers:

Welcome to the Illinois Valley YMCA Dolphin Swim Team!! Some people say swimmers are of a different breed. How many people do you know that like to swim back and forth, back and forth, surrounded by water? Only other swimmers. Right?! We think swimmers and their parents are special people. A little crazy, too! The sport of swimming takes the “Three D’s”: Desire, Dedication, and Determination on the part of the swimmer and the parent. It also takes commitment, persistence, and lots of practice! So why choose the sport of swimming? Here are a few Values of Swimming to consider:

- Swimming has no bench sitters. Competitive swimming is a sport in which there are no bench sitters because all programs are by age group and ability level.
- Swimming is healthy. Injuries are few and mild. The sport has been shown time and time again to be the best sport for overall conditioning of the body. Swimming provides cardiovascular fitness, muscular fitness, and increased flexibility.
- Swimming provides self-discipline. No one can make a person swim. All swimmers must develop an inner sense of discipline to devote themselves to the sport.
- Swimming is a direct reward system. In swimming, the harder you work, the greater your reward. The time clock is an objective judge of the result. There are no judges with subjective scores, no dependence on the efforts of others; only you and the clock evaluate your effort.
- Swimming teaches the relationship between team and individual. Neither team nor individual can exist and prosper in swimming without the other. Swimming teaches people to work with others.
- Swimming teaches organization. Swimmers have to organize their day to fit in all the life activities they want. They learn to do so, and in doing so, usually become much better students. Swimmers are almost always better students when they are training and competing.
- Swimming teaches people how to win, how to lose with grace, and how to develop a personal philosophy that will make them long-term successes in life. Swimmers learn to evaluate their efforts, set goals, and achieve. They gain an athlete’s mind that says, “I can control my life, and the results of it. If it is to be, it’s up to me.” To build a solid swimming program, the Dolphins need the continued positive cooperation of a strong parent organization. Coaches and swimmers make up two sides of a triangle. However, the real foundation of this strong organization is the third side, the base of PARENTS.

As a new parent to the program there is one important thing to remember - you must be patient. You need to remember that improvement is made gradually, sometimes in what may seem unnoticeable steps. Enthusiasm and encouragement, along with a positive attitude will help make these steps easier. Winning means different things to different people. To some, it’s bringing home the blue ribbon or gold medal. To others, it’s learning to do a great flip-turn, learning to do a start off the blocks, or swimming better and faster than you ever have before. It is seeing the smile of success on a swimmer’s face when the race is over, no matter where they finish in the final standings. It is our goal that during your time on the ILVY Dolphin Swim Team, you will learn more about swimming and all that is involved as a team. It is also our goal that you will learn more

about yourself mentally, physically, and socially, including the promotion of leadership talents and an attitude of sportsmanship, cooperation and dedication. Swimming is not just a sport. Swimming is a learning experience about life that helps to establish a positive self-image, provides new friendships and teaches responsibility.

This guide is designed as a supplement to our Parent Handbook to assist new families to learn about the sport of swimming and what to expect in the months ahead. You are always welcome to ask questions of other parents and members of the Parent Advisory Board to help you gain a better understanding and a greater comfort with our team and our sport. Below is the contact information of the Parent Advisory Board for your reference. Again, thank you for joining our team and we look forward to a fun and exciting season!

Julie Strand
Parent Advisory Board President

Parent Advisory Board Members

Julie Strand	Board President	julie.strand@att.net
Angie Wendelken	Board Vice President	wendelkenfam@gmail.com
Caryn Brown	Board Secretary	carynbrownphotography@yahoo.com
Robert Malerk	Board Treasurer	rmalerk@hotmail.com
Kate Young	At-Large Member	rainonfire@mac.com
Bruno Brzozowski	At-Large Member	maciejb@gmail.com
Shawn Zasvsa	At-Large Member	parentboard3@ilvydolphinswimteam.org

COMPETITIVE STROKES

The four competitive strokes are (1) freestyle, (2) backstroke, (3) breaststroke, and (4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age-group of the swimmer. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes swum by one swimmer called the individual medley. Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle (medley relay).

SWIM SEASONS

In general the sport of swimming is divided into two seasons. The winter, or "short course", season runs from mid-September to late-March/early April. The meets are held in a 25-yard pool. The summer, or "long course", season runs from early April to mid-August. Meets are generally held outside in 50 meter pools (Olympic size). Currently ILVY participates in the winter or short course season as a YMCA and in a long course season participates in USA Swimming meets and the YMCA LC state championship.

COMPETITION

The Illinois Valley Swim Team coaching staff does not see the first place person as the only winner. We'd rather look to see who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner, and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics: concentration, listening skills, and working toward goals.

Sports are not an end in itself, but a vehicle we use to teach children life skills and how to reach their potential. We use sport as organized play to demonstrate and measure one's abilities. Winning without learning is not the ILVY Swim Team's desired intention. In competition, the important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most seconds. The real critical measure is who learned the most from the competitive experience.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records, and other material benefits. They will, however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, and enhanced self- image. These are the things that make the swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to their peak potential, and to contribute to the world they live in.

TYPES OR LEVELS OF SWIM MEETS

1. Dual/Tri/Quad Meets - ILVY will compete with one, two or three additional team in a meet. These meets help promote team unity, but usually limit the number of events a swimmer may enter.
2. Invitational Meets-These meets generally do not have any qualification time standards. Most of the time these meets offer each one of the competitive strokes in the two distances offered for each group. Each swimmer is usually allowed to enter from 3-4 events per day.
3. Qualification Meets-These meets have some type of qualification time standard(s) that a swimmer must meet in order to enter the meet.
4. Northwest District Championship- The YMCAs of Illinois are divided into Districts. At the end of the season, each District holds its Championship

meet. The YMCA State Committee sets the qualifying time standards for this championship meet.

5. State Championships-At the end of each season, a State Championship meet is sanctioned by the YMCA of Illinois. The YMCA State Committee sets the qualifying time standards for these championship meets.
6. YMCA National Championships – At the end of each season, a National Championship meet is sanctioned by the YMCA of USA. The YMCA National Committee sets the qualifying time standards for these championship meets.
- 7.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

The ILVY Swim Team engages in a multi-level competition program that attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy:

1. We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance of improved performance. All the coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmers have both a "good" and a "bad" swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded by the coaching staff.
3. A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.

Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging, goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice to direct their training efforts.

Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. Oftentimes, a swimmer's "best" stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS...BUT, WERE AFRAID TO ASK

(Or didn't know what to ask):

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your coach.

Before the Meet Starts

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be discussed with the swimmers at practice, posted on the ILVY website and sent in a team email.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and other items. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
3. Find the check-in and have your swimmer check themselves in and get their events. This is done so that the people running the meet know who is actually at the meet.
4. Once "checked in", write each event-number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for.
5. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.
6. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.
7. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
8. According to USA Swimming rules parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
9. Psych Sheets. A psych sheet is usually available for sale at the admissions table in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

Meet Starts

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
2. A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the bullpen. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle. Generally, girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 9-10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle, report to the bullpen."
3. The Bull Pen will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order. Not all meets have a bullpen. Most meets will provide a bullpen for 8 and under, and 9-10 swimmers.
4. The swimmer swims their race.
5. After each swim:
 - A. He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.
 - B. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - a. Positive comments or praise
 - b. Suggestions for improvement
 - c. Positive comments
6. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - A. Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.
 - B. Take him/her back to the towel area and relax.
 - C. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
 - D. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again at the bullpen.
7. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there. (The coaches speak from experience on this issue).

What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things. The first thing you say is, "Hey that is not like you. You're usually a top swimmer." Then you can go on and talk about the good things the child did. You never talk about the negative things.

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer

on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things.

What to Take To the Meet

1. Most important: Swim Suit and ILVY Cap--and goggles and ILVY T-shirt.
2. Towels-Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
3. Something to sit on. Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
4. Sweat suits: bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
5. T-shirts: Two or three. Same reason as above.
6. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
8. Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have concessions at the meet. Suggestions for items to bring:
 - Drinks: Hi-C, Fruit juice, Gatorade
 - Snacks: Granola bars, Fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, jello cubes, sandwiches

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become a routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other parent for help or information!

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

Special Parent's Note

The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! If you don't think that a gym floor is comfortable, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on.

VERY BASIC SWIMMING RULES

Starts

The swimmers are not allowed a false start. If they jump the start and the starter thinks they are trying to get an advantage (whether intentional or not-it does not matter), they will be taken out of the race.

Turns and finishes

1. Freestyle: feet have to touch the wall
2. Backstroke: swimmers have to be on their back when they touch the wall. After he/she touches, he/she can then turn around, but he/she must push off on their back. At the finish a swimmer must finish on his/her back. A swimmer may not roll over and grab the wall until they have first touched it.
3. Breaststroke and Butterfly:

- A. Swimmers have to touch with both hands at the same time.
- B. A swimmer may not freestyle kick off the wall in either breaststroke or butterfly.
- C. When swimming butterfly, both arms must move at the same time.

Championship Meets

Our team's goal is to qualify as many swimmers as possible for the Championship meet(s). Championship meets are a special experience and extremely important in the athletes development.

As our season progresses, all of the swimmers get excited and motivated to "go for a District, Regional or State cut". Coaches believe that the honor of competing in a Championship meet is earned through consistent practice habits and competitive experience at swim meets. There's a big difference between "wanting" to go to the championships and "deserving" to be at the championships. Talent plays a supporting role to commitment.

To insure that all of our swimmers are properly prepared for their championships:

1. Meet attendance and participation through out the entire season is important. Meets offer the experience necessary for the championships.
2. Practice habits must be within our recommendations for the group the swimmer trains with. "Consistency" is the key word.

The State Championship is not the ultimate goal. Making the "cut off time" is simply a requirement to attend the meet. The goal is to be as prepared as possible and perform to the best of one's ability at the meet. Sometimes swimmers get the "end" and the "means" mixed up.

Swimmers are special people and deserve to have positive experiences as rewards for their dedication and commitment. Let's make sure that parents, swimmers, and coaches, are laying the foundation for the best possible experience at the Championship meet.

Prelims & Finals

In a preliminaries and finals meet format, the object of the preliminary swim is to qualify for the evening finals session. If a swimmer places among the top 8 (in an 8 lane pool) after his/her preliminary swim they then qualify to swim in the finals in the evening session. Some meets also swim a Consolation final. If a swimmer places from 9th - 16th place from preliminaries, he/she qualifies to participate in the Consolation finals in the evening session. In the evening finals session, the Consolation heat is swam first followed immediately by the Championship heat. During the prelims, the results are usually posted within 1/2 hour of the conclusion of the event. If a swimmer does not wish to swim in a final swim he or she may "scratch" the event and not be penalized. A swimmer should not scratch from a championship or consolation final without permission from their coach. This must take place within a half hour of the posting of the preliminary results. Therefore, within approximately 1 hour of the end of an event, a swimmer should know if they have made finals. A swimmer should never leave the meet without making sure if they are a finalist or an alternate. USA Swimming rules dictate that if a swimmer makes a finals event and fails to show up they are barred from participating in the remainder of the meet (individual events and relays). Alternates (the 17th & 18th place swimmers) should check with his/her coach about attending finals.

Circle Seeding

Used only in the prelims of Championship meets with events that have "prelims & finals". This affects only the top 24 seeded swimmers (8 lane pool) which compete in the last 3 heats. All other heats are regular seeding. Circle seeding goes like this: The fastest seeded swimmer will be in the last heat in lane 4. The second fastest swimmer will be in the second to last heat lane 4. The third fastest swimmer will be in the third to last heat lane 4. The fourth fastest swimmer will be in the last heat lane 5 and so on.

The finals are seeded like a regular meet as are any events that are swam as timed finals such as relays, distance freestyles and other events most often held on Friday evening as a timed finals session.

Awards & Placing

The swimmers who participate in the championship finals receive awards as listed in the meet information. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals often do not receive awards, but do score points for the team. One very important thing: Once a swimmer has made the championship final, the worst they can place is 8th, regardless of how slow they may swim in finals. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals may place no better than 9th (the winner of the heat) regardless how fast they swim. It has been known to happen that the winner of the consolation finals swims a time that would have placed him/her 2nd or 3rd in the championship finals, but the highest he/she can score is 9th. That is why it is important to swim very fast in the morning prelims session to make the championship finals. If a swimmer is disqualified in finals, they do not score points or get awards, however, a non-finals swimmer cannot be moved up to score. The place simply is not awarded. Alternates occasionally get to swim and can score the same as any other swimmer.

Receiving Awards

Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary for swimmers to be prompt and to cooperate fully with dignity and respect at the presentations. It is also customary for ILVY swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and receive the same with poise and a "thank you". Good sportsmanship is essential. If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmer to remain until the shooting is complete, being sure to cooperate with the photographer. Do not ham it up! The picture may be special to someone else. The image a swimmer presents is a direct reflection of the team.

Out of Town Meets

Trips to meets in other cities become an important aspect of a swimmer's career while advancing through the age group ranks. Illinois Valley Swim Team has established the following policies for the safety of the swimmer and peace-of-mind of parents:

1. Parents are to be responsible for arranging transportation and lodging to away meets. A certain hotel may be designated as "team hotel" and you will receive notification if arrangements for a "team hotel" are made.
2. These trips can be great fun for parents and swimmers alike. They also are a rare opportunity to participate in a special way in each young swimmer's career.

NUTRITION

Reprinted from
"Training Agenda", a

USS Sports Medicine and Science Series

Everything you do influences your performance, but your food choices have the most effect due to the long term and short term benefits. A proper diet, including proper selection of foods, will help your training and performance while also achieving a healthy lifestyle once you stop competing.

To help ensure a balanced diet, remember that there are no magical nutrition remedies. So forget the fads and eat a variety of wholesome foods from the four food groups--milk, meat, fruits & vegetables, and grains. Foods in these groups provide protein, fat carbohydrate, fiber and all the necessary vitamins and minerals. Within sports, there are four major periods that nutrition will impact:

During Training

1. Training represents the period in which athletes spend most of their time. Therefore, this category represents the most critical period. During this time, a diet high in carbohydrates is important. This is important since it is not uncommon for athletes training 4-6 hours a day to burn 2500 to 4000 calories a day. The best way to replenish these calories is with a high carbohydrate diet. By being conscious of this and by taking high carbohydrate foods or drink in the first 30 minutes following a workout, you can minimize depletion of energy stores.

Pre-event Nutrition

2. The major purpose of the pre-event diet is to ensure sufficient energy and fluid for the athlete. Two to three days before competition, a high carbohydrate diet with plenty of fluids should be emphasized. The pre-event meal should include a light, high carbohydrate meal three to four hours before the event.

Nutrition During Competition

3. Provided that good nutrition practices were followed during training, middle distance and sprint events will not be limited by nutrition-related factors. During a three to four day competition, make sure you consume plenty of fluids and each meal should include high carbohydrate, low fat selections.

Nutrition After Competition

4. High intensity work will deplete the muscle's energy supplies. Therefore, carbohydrates play an important role after competition to make sure energy stores are maintained.

Food Choices

The best food choices include a well balanced, mixed diet with choices from each of the four food groups. You can get all the nutrients you need by selecting a variety of foods in the recommended serving size from each of the following food groups:

Food Group	Selections	Servings
MILK	Milk, Cheese, Yogurt, Cottage Cheese, Ice Cream (Vitamins & Protein)	4 or More
MEAT	Meat, Fish, Poultry, Eggs, Beans, Peas, Nuts (minerals & protein)	2 or More
	Fresh, Frozen, Canned, Dried and Juiced Fruits and	

FRUIT & VEGETABLES	Vegetables (Vitamins and Carbohydrates)	8 or More
GRAIN	Cereals, Breads, Rolls, Pasta, Muffins, Pancakes (Carbohydrates and Minerals)	8 or More
OTHERS	Cakes, Cookies, Pies, Candy Soft Drinks, Chips (Carbohydrates and Fat)	ONLY if you need additional calories AFTER selections from above

Eating Out

Restaurants play an important role in the diets of athletes on the go. Today, these restaurants can provide a viable source of good nutrition--but the choice is yours and selection is critical. Here are some guidelines to make wiser choices:

Menu Adjectives

Fat content must be watched when selecting menu items. If you see one of the following words, try to make another selection:

Fried, Crispy, Breaded, Scampi Style, Creamed, Buttery, Au Gratin, Gravy.

Selection adjectives that are **good** include:

Marinara, Steamed, Boiled, Broiled, Tomato Sauce, In Its Own Juice, Poached, Charbroiled.

Restaurant Choices

Depending on the restaurant you go to, here are some tips when selecting foods:

Mexican - Choose pot beans instead of refried beans and chicken or bean burritos and tostados. Ask for baked, soft corn tortillas instead of deep fried shells. Salsa is fine, but watch your chip intake.

Italian - Pasta with marinara sauce is good but watch Alfredo sauces. Pizza, plain or with vegetables, is a good choice. Bread is good (watch the butter). Low-fat Italian ices are better than rich dessert choices.

Chinese - Stir fried and steamed dishes, like chicken & vegetables and rice, are good choices. Minimize fried egg roll intake or avoid all together.

Burger Places - Salad bars are great but watch the dressing. Look for grilled burgers, hold the mayonnaise and go light on the cheese. Watch your French fry intake (select a baked potato with a little butter if you can) and go easy on the milk shakes.

Breakfast Cafes - Always ask for butter on the side of pancakes, toast, muffins, etc. Select fresh fruit, juices and whole-grain breads and muffins.

GLOSSARY

A Glossary of those strange and wacky words we use in the sport of swimming. Parents! You may or may not find these words in the English Dictionary, and if you do, their definitions will probably be radically different than the ones listed in this Glossary. Relax and take your time reading. Soon you'll be understanding and even speaking the SWIM language.

Aggregate Time	Add up times achieved by 4 swimmers in individual events which are added together to arrive at a provable relay entry time.
Admission	Swim meets charge for spectators to view the meets.
Age Group	Division of swimmers according to age. The YMCA Age Group divisions are: 8&Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15 & Older. Some meets will have swimmers listed as 8 &Under, 10&Under, 12&Under, 14&Under and 21&Under.
Alternate	In a Prelims/Finals meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalist are designated as alternates. The faster of the 2 being first alternate and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on a moments notice. This can also be the 5 th swimmer on a relay at a championship meet in case one of the other relay swimmers is ill or injured.
Anchor	The final swimmer in a relay.
ASCA	The American Swim Coaches Association. This is a professional organization for swim coaches throughout the nation. Certifying coaches and offering many services for coaches' education and career advancement.
Backstroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swam as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, and 200 yds/mtr. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd back)
Banner	A team sign that is displayed at swim meets. Banners are usually made from nylon material and carry the Team Logo and possibly the name of a popular team sponsor. Some size restrictions are enforced at certain meets.
Beep	The starting sound from an electronic, computerized timing system.
Bell	A sounding device used in place of a gun. Used mainly with a fully automatic timing system. See Gun Lap.
Blocks	The starting platforms located behind each lane. Some pools have blocks at the deeper end of the pool, and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.
Bottom	The floor of the pool. Bottom depths are usually marked on the walls or sides of the pool.
Breaststroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swam as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, and 200 yds/mtr. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd back)
Bull Pen	The staging area where swimmers wait to receive their lane and heat assignments for a swimming event. Area is usually away from the pool and has rows of chairs for the swimmers to sit.

Butterfly	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, and 200 yds/mtr. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd back)
Button	The manual Timing System stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. The button is at the end of a wire, plugged into a deck terminal box. There are usually 1-2 buttons per lane. It is the timers responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.
Cap	The latex or lycra covering worn on the head of swimmers. The colors and team logo's adorning these caps are limitless. State Team Caps, plain practice caps, etc.
Carbohydrates	The main source of food energy used by athletes. Refer to a Nutritional Manual for more information.
Championship Meet	The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.
Championship Finals	The top 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the Finals. This is the fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held.
Check-In	Also referred to as positive check in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host. If a swimmer fails to check in prior to warm ups they will not be assigned a heat and lane for their entered events. The swimmer will be scratched the meet for that day.
Chlorine	The chemical used by most pools to kill the bacteria in water and keep it clear and safe to swim in.
Circle Seeding	A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes. (I.e.) Lane 4 in the final 3 heats. See rule book for exact method for seeding depending on the lanes in the pool.
Code	A set of rules that have been officially published.
Code of Ethics	A Code of Conduct that both swimmers and coaches are required to sign at certain USA/LSC sponsored events. The Code is not strict and involves common sense and proper behavior.
Colorado	A brand of automatic timing system.
Consolation Finals	After the fastest 6 or 8 swimmers, the next 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the Finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held and are conducted before the Championship heat.
Cool-down	The loosening a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.
Course	Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. (I.e.) Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 yards.

Deadline	The date meet entries must be "postmarked" by, to be accepted by the meet host. Making the meet deadline does not guarantee acceptance into a meet since many meets are "full" weeks before the entry deadline.
Deck	The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches.
Deck Seeding	Swimmers report to a bull pen or staging area and receive their lane and heat assignments for the events.
Dehydration	The abnormal depletion of body fluids (water). The most common cause of swimmers cramps and sick feelings.
Developmental	A classification of meet, competition, or practice group that is usually held early in the season. The purpose of a developmental meet or group is to allow all levels of swimmers to practice/compete in a low pressure environment.
Distance	How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards (2 lengths), 100 yards (4 lengths), 200 yards (8 lengths), 400 yards (16 lengths), 500 yards (20 lengths), 1000 yards (40 lengths), 1650 yards (66 lengths).
Disqualified (DQ)	A swimmers performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with open hand above their head.
Dive	Entering the water head first. Diving is not allowed during warmups except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimmers coach.
Diving Well	A separate pool or a pool set off to the side of the competition pool. This pool has deeper water and diving boards/platforms. During a meet, this area may be designated as a warm-down pool with proper supervision.
Dual Meet	Type of meet where two (2) teams/clubs compete against each other.
Dropped Time	When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time".
Dryland	The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.
Entry	An Individual, Relay team, or Team roster's event list into a swim competition.
Entry Chairperson	The host clubs designated person who is responsible for receiving, and making sure the entries have met the deadline, or returning the entries if the meet is full. This person usually will find discrepancies in the meet entries and notify the entering team to correct any errors.
Entry Fees	The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the LSC and type of meet.
Entry Limit	Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they cannot exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.
Electronic Timing	Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touchpad's in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers time.

Eligible to compete	The status of a member swimmer that means they are registered with the Team, LSC, USA Swimming and have met all the requirements.
Event	A race or stroke over a given distance. An event equals 1 preliminary with its final, or 1 timed final.
False Start	When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team.
Family Account	Each member family has an account established with the swim team. The account can be viewed by signing onto the team website and clicking "my account".
Family Commitment	Each member family has a commitment to the team. This commitment includes, attending practice, attending meets, working team hosted meets, etc.
Fastest to Slowest	A seeding method used on the longer events held at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on. Many times these events will alternate one girls heat and one boys heat until all swimmers have competed.
Fees	Money paid by swimmers for services. (I.e.) Practice fees, registration fees, meet entry fees, etc. Fees for your family account can be viewed by signing onto the team website.
FINA	The international, rules making organization, for the sport of swimming. In order for a swimmer to wear a technical swim suit during a meet it must be FINA approved and the suit will be marked as such.
Finals	The final race of each event. See "Championship Finals", "Consolation Finals", "Timed Finals", etc.
Final Results	The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.
Fine	The monetary penalty assessed a swimmer or club when a swimmer does not achieve the necessary time required to swim in an event, and cannot prove they have done the time previously.
Fins	Large rubber fin type devices that fit on a swimmers feet. Used in swim practice, not competition.
Flags	Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.
Fundraiser	A money making endeavor by a swim team usually involving both parents and swimmers. Usually in the form of hosting a swim meet.
Freestyle	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, 200 yds/mtr, 400 mtr/500 yd 800 mtr/1000 yds, 1500 mtr/1650 yds. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd free)
Goals	The short and long range targets for swimmers to aim for.
Goggles	Glasses type devices worn by swimmers to keep their eyes from being irritated by the chlorine in the water.

Final Lap Bell	The part of a freestyle distance race (500 yards or longer) when the swimmer has 2 lengths plus 5 yards to go. The starter rings a bell over the lane of the lead swimmer when swimmer is at the backstroke flags.
Handbook	A reference manual published by teams and LSC's or other swimming organizations.
Heats	A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers time swam, after all heats of the event are completed.
Heat Winner	A ribbon or coupon given to the winner of a single heat at a swim meet. Not all meets provide a Heat Winner.
Heat Sheet	A listing of the assigned heats and lanes for each event. These are usually posted at the beginning of a meet in designated areas for the swimmers to see what heat and lane they should report to for their event.
High Point	An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet. All meets do not offer high point awards; check the pre meet information.
Hosted Meet	A meet which is organized, coordinated and run by a swim team. This requires the cooperation and assistance from every swimmer and parent on the team in order to run a successful meet that other teams will want to enter each year. A hosted meet is a fundraiser for the team.
IHSA	Illinois High School Association. Oversees high school athletics. Website for Illinois is www.ihsa.org
Illegal	Doing something against the rules that is cause for disqualification (DQ).
IM	Individual Medley. A swimming event using all 4 of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle. Equal distances must be swum of each stroke. Distances offered: 100 yds, 200 yds/mtr, 400 yds/mtr.
Interval	A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.
Invitational	Type of meet that requires a team to request an invitation to attend the meet.
ISI	Illinois Swimming Inc. The Illinois LSC.
Jump	An illegal start done by the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th member of a relay team. The swimmer on the block breaks contact with the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.
YMCA Nationals	A National Championship meet for swimmers 12 to 21 years old. Qualification times are necessary
Kick	The leg movements of a swimmer. A popular word to "yell" to encourage swimmers during a race.
Kick Board	A flotation device used by swimmers during practice. A lightweight object used with great accuracy by coaches.

Lane	The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim. (I.e.) Lane 1 or Lane 2. Pools with starting blocks at only one end: As the swimmers stand behind the blocks, lanes are numbered from Right (lane 1) to Left (Lane 8).
Lane Lines	Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.
Lap	One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.
Lap Counter	The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end (turn end) of the pool. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.
Late Entries	Meet entries from a team or individual that are received by the meet host after the entry deadline. These entries are usually not accepted and are returned to sender.
Leg	The part of a relay event swam by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.
Length	The extent of the competitive course from end to end. See lap.
Long Course	A 50 meter pool.
LSC	Local Swim Committee. The local level administrative division of the corporation (USA Swimming) with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by the Corporation. ISI is the LSC for Illinois.
Lycra	A stretch material used to make competitive swim suits and swim caps.
Malfunction	A mechanical or electronic failure - not a human failure by the swimmer.
Mark	The command to take your starting position. This command is just before the beep to start the race.
Marshall	The adult(s) (official) who control the crowd and swimmer flow at a swim meet.
Medals	Awards given to the swimmers at meets. They vary in size and design and method of presentation.
Meet	A series of events held in one program.
Meet Director	The official in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet.
Meters	The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the metric system. Long course meters is 50 meters, short course meters is 25 meters.
Mile	The slang referring to the 1500 meter or the 1650 yard freestyle, both of which are slightly short of a mile.
Nationals	USA Swimming senior or junior level meets conducted in March/April and August. See Senior or Junior Nationals.

Natorium	A building constructed for the purpose of housing a swimming pool and related equipment.
NGB	National Governing Body
Non-Conforming Time	A short course time submitted to qualify for a long course meet, or vice versa.
Novice	A beginner or someone who does not have experience.
NRT	National Reportable Time. A time list published once a year, which if a swimmer equals or betters the time on the list, they may submit their time in that event for consideration for national recognition.
NT	No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.
Nutrition	The sum of the processes by which a swimmer takes in and utilizes food substances.
Officials	The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition.
OT	Official Time. The swimmers event time recorded to one hundredth of a second (.01).
OVC	Official Verification Card. A 3 copy form for certifying a national qualifying time made by a swimmer and issued only by a verification official of the area in which the meet was held.
Parka	Large 3/4 length fur lined coats worn by swimmers. Usually are in team colors with logo or team name.
Pace Clock	The large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups or swim practice.
Paddle	Colored plastic devices worn on the swimmers hands during swim practice.
Password	Each member family received via email a password to sign onto the team website.
Positive Check In	The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a pre seeded meet. The swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host. Also see Check In.
Practice	The scheduled workouts a swimmers attends with their swim team.
Prelims	Session of a Prelims/Finals meet in which the qualification heats are conducted.
Prelims-Finals	Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session. The fastest 6 or 8 (Championship Heat) swimmers and the next fastest 6 or 8 swimmers (Consolation Heat) return in the evening to compete in the Finals. A swimmer who has qualified in the Consolation Finals may not place in the Championship Finals even if their finals time would place them so. The converse also applies.
Pre-seeded	A meet conducted without a bull pen in which a swimmer knows what lane and heat they are in by looking at the posted heat sheet.
Proof of Time	An official meet result, OVC, or other accepted form. Swimmers/Coaches must supply proof of time with some meet entries, and other meets it is not required unless a swimmer misses a cut of time at the meet.

Psych Sheet	The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers seed times in the various events at a swim meet. These sheets vary in accuracy, since the coaches submit swimmers times many weeks before the meet. Psych sheets are sold at the admissions table and are used mainly to make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. Parents enjoy looking at the seeding prior to the race plus swimmers can tell the order the events will be conducted and get a rough idea how long the meet sessions will last.
Pull Buoy	A flotation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice.
Qualifying Times	Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer.
Race	Any single swimming competition. (Ie) preliminary, final, timed final.
Referee	The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the "Wet Side" administration and decisions.
Relays	A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1.) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. Medley relays are conducted over 200 yd/mtr and 400 yd/mtr distances. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle. Free relays are conducted over 100 yd (8 & unders), 200 yd/mtr, 400 yd/mtr, and 800 yd/mtr distances.
Ribbons	Awards in a variety of sizes, styles, and colors, given at swim meets.
Safety	The responsible and careful actions of those participating in a swim meet. USS and each LSC now have a "Safety Coordinator" and each meet must have "Marshalls" in charge of safety.
Sanction	A permit issued by an LSC to a YMCA Swimming group member to conduct an event or meet.
Sanction Fee	The amount paid by a USA Swimming group member to an LSC or YMCA Nationals for issuing a sanction.
Schedule	List of meets with dates, meet host, meet location, type of meet, and contacts address and phone.
Scratch	To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events. Also, if a swimmer fails to check in at a positive check in meet, they are scratched from the meet for that day.
Seed	Assign the swimmers heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.
Seeding	Deck Seeding - swimmers are called to report to the Clerk of the Course. After scratches are determined, the event is seeded. Pre Seeding - swimmers are arranged in heats according to submitted times, usually a day prior to the meet.
Session	Portion of meet distinctly separated from other portions by time, type of competition, or age group.

Short Course	A 25 yard or 25 meter pool.
Simultaneously	A term used in the rules of butterfly and breaststroke, meaning at the same time.
Splash	United States Swimming newsletter that is mailed bi-monthly.
Split	A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance that is timed. (I.e.) A swimmers first 50 time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 race. It is common to take multiple splits for the longer distances.
Start	The beginning of a race. The dive used to begin a race.
Starter	The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.
State Qualifier	A swimmer who has made the necessary cut off times to enter the State meet.
Stand-up	The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.
Step-Down	The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.
Stopwatch	The hand held device used by timers and coaches for timing a swimmers races.
Stroke	There are 4 competitive strokes: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle.
Stroke Judge	The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be Disqualified.
Submitted Time	Times used to enter swimmers in meets. These times must have been achieved by the swimmer at previous meets.
Suit	The racing uniform worn by the swimmer, in the water, during competition. The two most popular styles/types of suits worn are: Nylon, Lycra.
Swim-off	In a Prelims/Finals type competition, a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise ties stand.
Taper	The resting phase of a senior swimmer at the end of the season before the championship meet.
Team Area	A designated area (such as a gymnasium) that is set aside for swimmers to rest during a meet.
Team Records	The statistics a team keeps, listing the fastest swimmer in the teams' history for each age group/each event.
Team Website	The best form of communication between coaches, board members, parents and swimmers. All team information "up to the minute" can be found here. The team website is www.ilvydolphinswimteam.org
Timed Finals	Competition in which only heats are swum and final placing is determined by those times.

Time Standard	A time set by a governing body that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.
Timer	The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.
Time Trial	An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.
Touch Out	To reach the touchpad and finish first in a close race.
Touch Pad	The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race.
Transfer	The act of leaving one team or LSC and going to another. Special rules apply when transferring between a team depending on whether it is a YMCA to a YMCA, USA to USA or YMCA to USA. For specific rules on YMCA transfers you can visit www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org and for USA team transfers www.usaswimming.org .
Trophy	Type of award given to teams and swimmers at meets.
Turn end	The end of the pool opposite the starting blocks.
Unattached	An athlete member who competes, but does not represent a club or team. (abbr. UNA). The swimmer cannot participate on a relay as long as they are unattached. YMCA does not allow swimmers to swim unattached at YMCA sanctioned meets. USA registered swimmers may swim unattached at USA sanctioned meets.
Uniform	The various parts of clothing a swimmer wears at a meet. This may include: Parka, Warm-up jacket, Team duffel bag, sweat pants, suits, cap, goggles, T-shirt, etc.
Unofficial Time	The time displayed on a read out board or read over the intercom by the announcer immediately after the race. After the time has been checked, it will become the official time.
Vitamins	The building blocks of the body. Vitamins do not supply energy, but are necessary for proper health.
Volunteer	Member parents that work together to maintain the team's administrative functions. Also, to assist the coaches in keeping open communication within the team. MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!
Warm-up	The practice and loosening session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.
Weights	The various barbells / benches / machines used by swimmers during their dryland program.
Whistle	The sound a starter/referee makes to signal for quiet before they give the command to start the race.
Work Out	The practice sessions a swimmer attends.

Yards	The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the American system. A short course yard pool is 25 yards (75 feet) in length.
Yardage	The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.